

(Washington, DC)—Today the House of Representatives approved the Fiscal Year 2008 Budget Resolution Conference Agreement, which includes legislation authored by Congresswoman Gwen Moore calling on Congress to restore cuts made in 2006 to the child support enforcement program and to restore the ability of states like Wisconsin to continue passing on every cent of child support payments to families.

“We know that child support is critical to helping families escape poverty, move off public assistance, and become self-sufficient. This provision says loud and clear that Congress needs to undo the child support cuts made by the Republican majority in the last Congress,” Moore said.

The federal child support program provides critical funding to states to help them locate noncustodial parents, establish paternity, and collect overdue child support payments. Deep cuts to the program made by the GOP Congress last year mean that Milwaukee County alone will see an estimated \$7.7 million reduction in these resources in 2008. Nationwide, \$11 billion in child support payments will go uncollected over the next 10 years unless Congress acts.

The Moore “Sense of the Congress” language also urges Congress to enact legislation that would restore the ability of states like Wisconsin to pass on 100% of collected child support payments to the families that need them. Unless additional legislation is passed, states must now retain a percentage of those child support payments owed to families on federal assistance (Temporary Assistance to Needy Families).

For many years, Wisconsin benefited from a federal waiver that enabled the state’s Wisconsin Works program to pass through the full amount of child support payments to custodial parents working their way off welfare. Wisconsin’s program was highly successful with non-custodial parents receiving, on average, \$150 more per month.

“It’s not enough just to collect the child support—we need to make sure that every last cent goes to the families that desperately need it, rather than administrative expenses,” Moore said. “Let’s follow Wisconsin’s leadership on this issue and pass this common-sense measure.”

The Budget Resolution Conference Report, which includes the Moore proposal, makes investments in key programs, such as veterans' health care, education, and children's health care. The Conference Report is now headed to the Senate for final consideration.

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